

Appl. No. : 10/521,205
Filed : January 12, 2005

REMARKS

Claims 1, 8, and 10 have been amended to clarify the claimed invention. This amendment does not constitute new matter or new issue. Applicant respectfully requests entry of the amendments and reconsideration of the application in view of the amendments and the following remarks.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee (US5,838,856) in view of Shimoji (US6,435,728).

Claims 1, 8, and 10 have been amended to further clarify: **“each plug is independently detachable from the adapter in a direction perpendicular to the axial direction of the optical fiber”**. This particular feature is not taught in either Lee or Shimoji. Neither the structure of Lee nor the structure of Shimoji is capable of performing the recited movement. Advantages obtainable from this unique structure is described on page 1 line 27 through page 2 line 27.

Since none of the references teaches the subject matter recited in claims 1, 8, and 10 and the above feature was not commonly known in the art, the claims cannot be obvious over Lee in view of Shimoji.

Claims 2-7, and 9 depend from either Claim 1 or 8, and at least for this reason, these claims also cannot be obvious over the references. The other grounds for rejection set forth in the Office Action are moot.

With regard to Claim 11-16, the Office Action states that the relevant steps can be found in Figure 1-4. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Claim 11 recites among others that **“a step of attaching said two plugs to an adapter one by one in a direction perpendicular to the axial direction of the optical fiber”**. This limitation cannot be found in Figs 1-4 of Lee. In Lee, the two plugs must be attached together prior to attaching to the adapter. In Shimoji, push-pull connectors are disclosed in which the plug must be pushed in the axial direction of the optical fiber. Since both references require attaching two plugs in the axial direction, even if Lee and Shimoji are managed to combine, it would not lead to the connecting method recited in Claim 11.

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At least for the above reasons, Claim 11 cannot be obvious over the references. Claims 12-16 depend ultimately from Claim 11, and thus these claims also cannot be obvious over the references and the other grounds for rejection set forth in the Office Action are moot.

With regard to Claim 17, Claim 17 recites among others that "attaching said two plugs to an adapter **one by one in a direction perpendicular to the axial direction of the optical fiber** so as to align each optical fiber of the respective two plugs".

As discussed above, the limitation described above cannot be found in either Lee or Shimoji. At least for the reason, Claim 17 cannot be obvious over the references.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections.

CONCLUSION

In light of the Applicant's amendments to the claims and the foregoing Remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any remaining concerns which might prevent the prompt allowance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number appearing below.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

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By: 

Katsuhiro Arai
Registration No. 43,315
Attorney of Record
Customer No. 20,995
(949) 760-0404

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080207